

You can prevent a Listeria infection by avoiding certain highrisk foods and by handling food carefully

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### How to prevent a Listeria infection

- Do not eat foods most likely to be contaminated with Listeria (a list of common foods is inside)
- Heat food until steaming hot
- Keep uncooked meats separate from vegetables and ready-to-eat foods
- Use separate cutting boards, knives and containers for uncooked meats, vegetables and ready-to-eat foods.
- Wash hands, knives and cutting boards after handling uncooked foods, deli meats and hot dogs.

### For more information on Listeria:

- Talk to your health care provider
- Call Public Health at 206-296-4774
- Visit these web pages:
  - [www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/diseases/listeriosis](http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/diseases/listeriosis)
  - [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dmbd/diseaseinfo/listeriosis\\_g\\_span.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dmbd/diseaseinfo/listeriosis_g_span.htm)

### Information endorsed by:

Midwives' Association of Washington State



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Infectious Disease Society of Washington



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Public Health  
Seattle & King County 

Certain foods can harm pregnant women & their newborns



Listeria infection is a serious illness caused by eating food contaminated with the Listeria bacteria

## Listeria is a bacteria that can contaminate food

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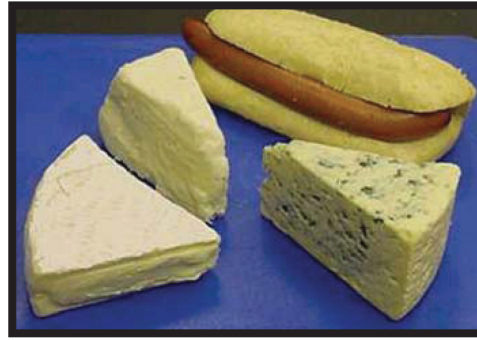
### How do you get infected with Listeria?

- By eating foods contaminated with Listeria during or after the production process.
- Babies can be born with a Listeria infection if their mothers eat contaminated food during pregnancy.

### Why is a Listeria infection so dangerous?

- Early in pregnancy, a Listeria infection can cause a miscarriage.
- Later in pregnancy, a Listeria infection can cause a baby to be born prematurely.
- After birth, Listeria can cause serious infection or death in a newborn.

*Food and drinks contaminated with Listeria can look and smell normal*

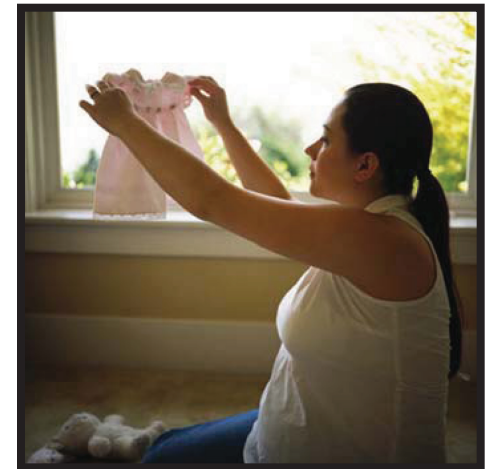


### Foods most likely to have Listeria

- Soft cheeses such as brie, feta, blue-veined cheeses or Mexican style soft cheeses - like queso fresco. (Hard and processed cheeses such as slices, spreads, cream cheese, cottage cheese and yogurt are not high risk.)
- Raw, unpasteurized milk
- Hot dogs, unless they are cooked to steaming hot
- Lunch meats or cold cuts, unless they are cooked to steaming hot
- Pates or meat spreads, unless they are canned
- Smoked seafood from the refrigerator case, unless it is cooked before eating

## What are the symptoms of a Listeria infection?

- Fever, muscle aches and sometimes nausea or diarrhea in adults
- Headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance or convulsions can occur
- Infected pregnant women often experience only a mild, flu-like illness
- Newborns can develop symptoms of serious blood infection or meningitis



**Pregnant women are 20 times more likely than other healthy adults to get a Listeria infection**



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